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SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [MOPS](#) [MARR](#) [AF](#) [IT](#) [NATO](#)
SUBJECT: ISAF: ITALY PLEDGES MORE FLEXIBLE USE OF TROOPS
AND POLICE TRAINERS

REF: A. STATE 24923
[B](#). ROME DAILY REPORT 7/2/08
[C](#). ROME 484

Classified By: Acting Political Minister-Counselor Jonathan Cohen for R
easons 1.4 (B) and (D)

[1](#)1. (C) Summary. Poloff met with Italian MFA Acting NATO Office Director Carlo Batori on June 25 to review Italian commitments to ISAF in the wake of the June 12 meeting between President Bush and PM Berlusconi. Batori confirmed that Italy is "removing" geographic caveats on Italian forces under ISAF and replacing them with a "clarifying note" reducing the Italian response time to COMISAF requests for Italian troops to deploy out of their Command Sectors (RC-West and RC-Capital). Carabinieri trainers will deploy to Afghanistan in July to start training Afghan Police at the request of CSTC-A and COMISAF. Batori said that Italian OMLTs and Police Mentoring Teams attached to Afghan units will be available to deploy with those units outside of the Italian zone as long as the request is made through ISAF and the teams remain under ISAF ROE. Italian military planners hope to send a maneuver battalion to Farah province (the area of RC-West with the most difficult security environment) after Italy relinquishes the rotating command of RC-Capital in August. End Summary.

Geographic Caveats Have Been "Removed"...

[1](#)2. (C) Poloff met with Italian MFA Acting NATO Office Director Carlo Batori on June 25 to review what changes the GOI is making to its ISAF commitments in the wake of PM Berlusconi's June 12 meeting with President Bush and in light of the June 26 visit of NATO SYG de Hoop Scheffer. Batori confirmed that the President's statement made during the June 12 press conference in Rome, namely that Italy has "removed" its geographic caveats, is an accurate characterization. FM Frattini has instructed the Italian mission to NATO to remove the geographic caveat requiring 72 hours for a response to a COMISAF request to use Italian troops outside of the Italian AOR (RC-West and RC-Capital) and replace it with a "clarifying note" saying that all such requests will be answered within 6 hours. He confirmed that this would apply to Italian aviation assets as well. Batori said that he did not believe that the clarifying note would appear on the SHAPE list of caveats, leaving only a single caveat in the Italian column: the injunction against turning over captured combatants to Afghan authorities if there is reason to believe they may receive the death penalty. (Note: MOD La Russa, during his July 1 visit to Afghanistan, confirmed that

the change in caveats is now operational. (Ref B))

¶3. (C) Batori said that it would have been politically impossible to delete the geographic caveat entirely without risking a difficult fight with the Center-Left opposition in Parliament, so it was decided to downgrade the caveat to a clarifying note, which only requires that Parliament be informed of the change. He stressed, however, that FM Frattini and MOD La Russa made clear in their June 11 appearance before Parliament that the Berlusconi government would be receptive to requests from ISAF, caveats or no caveats. He noted that NATO Allies were taking this as a signal of solidarity and that they were right to do so.

... but Carabinieri Probably Won't Embed with Marines

¶4. (C) Batori noted positive effects of the President's June 12 statement thanking Italy for sending Carabinieri police trainers to Afghanistan, and hoped that the plan to have Carabinieri take over half of the training program at the ANCOP training center at Adraskan would replicate the success of the Carabinieri police training in Iraq under NTM-I. (Note: During the visit of the CSTC-A military planners to Rome on May 26, the Carabinieri agreed to send 30-40 trainers to U.S.-run ANCOP and ANP training facilities in Adraskan and Camp Shouz, respectively. Both of these are located in Herat Province, inside the Italian AOR).

¶5. (C) Poloff noted that the recently-approved deployment order sending the Carabinieri to Afghanistan does not include

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a provision to embed Carabinieri mentors with U.S. Marine police training platoons, as we had requested via COMISAF on April 1 (Ref A), in four key ANP (Afghan National Police) districts in RC-South and RC-West. Batori replied that the deployment order gives the Carabinieri commander on the ground the authority to send trainers to the districts, but acknowledged that this would not happen until mid-July at the earliest, and the Marines depart October 1. He said that the Italian Defense General Staff (IDGS) had not been comfortable with the embedding proposal, because if the Carabinieri suffered casualties the MOD would have to justify before Parliament the decision to delegate force protection to U.S. troops. The IDGS appreciated CSTC-A willingness to let embedded Carabinieri remain under ISAF Rules of Engagement (as opposed to the OEF ROE under which the Marine platoons operate), but did not see how this could work in practice.

Future Police Training Team Deployments to be More Flexible

¶6. (C) Batori stressed that the GOI commitment to be flexible on out-of-area deployments stands despite the difficulties with embedding with the U.S. Marines. Poloff asked about a separate CSTC-A request that the Carabinieri embed mentors with the ANCOP units they train at Adraskan in late 2008 when those units deploy to districts as part of the Focused District Development program. Batori said that all future Carabinieri Police Mentoring Teams attached to ANP or ANCOP units and, by extension, any Italian OMLTs attached to ANA units will be considered deployable with those units even if they are sent out of the Italian AOR, so long as they remain under ISAF chain of command and the request is made through COMISAF. The Carabinieri have deployed such teams before in Iraq -- the so-called "Viper Teams" -- to monitor the progress of Iraqi National Police trained by the Carabinieri at Camp Dublin.

Plans for a Maneuver Battalion in Farah, Deployable to RC-South

¶7. (C) Turning to the question of the redistribution of

Italian forces once the Italian rotating command of RC-Capital expires in August, Batori said that the current plan is to move some of troops currently in Kabul to Farah Province (RC-West) to form the core of a battalion-sized maneuver unit that would be able to respond to the worsening security situation in Farah, which borders Helmand district in RC-South. He said that this unit would be theoretically deployable to RC-South if COMISAF requested it, consistent with Italy's new geographic flexibility. Italy aims to keep its forces currently located in Herat province in place, allowing the maneuver unit in Farah to build up without drawing heavily on forces in Herat. (Note: This tracks with comments that MOD La Russa made to the press during his July 1 Afghanistan visit.)

18. (C) Batori previewed the GOI agenda for Berlusconi's meeting with NATO SYG de Hoop Scheffer, which included a discussion of the German request to send Italian Tornado aircraft to Afghanistan to share the combat air cover burden (per the CJSOR list of priority shortfalls), the announcement of a GOI contribution of USD 600,000 to the ISAF Post-Operation Humanitarian Relief Fund, and the addition of Italian personnel to the NATO Media Operations Center. SPOGLI